

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

- Names have power. They stick in readers' minds.
- Characters are the children of your mind. The names you choose help them come alive.
- Names must fit the characters, the setting, and the story.

GENRE

- Consider in terms of setting and time. Where and when does it take place? (Or if set in an imaginary world, ask where and when it would be if it was real?)
- Does your story have a certain theme or atmosphere? Character names can reflect that (as can names of places and things).
- A few exceptions to setting/time/theme are usually okay, but make sure they still fit.
- Wikipedia search – can give you examples of people with a name, where they're from, and when they were born and/or died.

CHARACTER PROFILING

- Factors such as family traditions and/or ethnical, religious, social background etc. – how important are they to the character and/or your story?
- Names can highlight a physical/personality trait of the character or the opposite, something about you, someone you know, or place, via name meaning, how name sounds, anagram, etc.
- When checking the origin and/or meaning of a name, check **MORE THAN ONE PRIMARY SOURCE** (naming websites) to see what's consistent
- Factors can influence name choice; name choice can influence factors to build profile
- Sometimes no name is effective.

DISTINGUISHABLE

- Names help readers keep track of who's who so it's important names are distinguishable (unless you want them similar for a reason, like a running gag)
- William M. Akers in *Your Screenplay Sucks! 100 Ways to Make it Great* recommends varying up these factors: 1) First Initial, 2) Letter Length, and 3) Rhyme
- Other factors you can use to strengthen variation: Second Letter and First Syllable
- Some characters go by nicknames, last names, and/or titles.
- Alliteration

CREATING NEW NAMES

- Consider story and setting – will new names fit? How many?
- Consider character profiling – reference/tribute something about the character(s)
- Name variants – look at existing spellings, and see if you want to create a new one

PRONUNCIATION

- If a name has more than one pronunciation, people can say it different ways.
- Some names are harder to pronounce than others.
- As with name origin/meaning, check more than one website for pronunciation(s)
- If a story has multiple names that can have pronunciation issues, create a pronunciation guide
- If there aren't so many, incorporate pronunciation(s) into the story, either in text or dialogue.
- Make sure you clarify the pronunciation **YOU** want to be used.

In the end, choose names YOU WANT.

RESOURCES

FIRST NAMES

- <http://www.behindthename.com/>
- <http://www.thinkbabynames.com/>
- <http://www.britishbabynames.com/> (British)
- <http://www.medievalists.net/2014/04/girls-names-medieval-london-usual-ones/> (Medieval English Girls)
- <https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/Irish-names.html> (Irish)
- <http://www.namenerds.com/irish/lists.html> (Irish)

LAST NAMES

- <http://surnames.behindthename.com/>
- <http://www.scottishpenpals.com/>
- <http://www.surnameweb.org/>
- <http://www.searchforancestors.com/surnames/origin/>
- <https://www.ancestry.com/learn/facts>
- <https://surname.sofeminine.co.uk/w/surnames/most-common-surnames-in-great-britain.html> (Britain)

BOTH

- <https://www.houseofnames.com/>
- <http://heraldry.sca.org/names/spanish/> (16th Century Spain)

PRONUNCIATION

- <https://www.pronouncenames.com/>
- <https://forvo.com/>
- <https://inogolo.com/>
- <https://www.howtopronounce.com/>
- <http://www.howtosay.co.in/>

GAELIC PRONUNCIATION

- <http://www.standingstones.com/gaelpron.html>
- <http://www.angaelmagazine.com/pronunciation/introduction.htm>
- <https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Irish/Pronunciation>
- <http://www.gaolnaofa.org/articles/a-beginners-guide-to-old-irish-pronunciation/>

RHYMES

- <https://www.whatrhymswith.info/>
- <http://www.rhymedict.com/what-rhymes/>
- <https://findwords.info/rhyme>
- <http://www.visualrhymes.com/index.php>
- <https://rhymezone.com/>
- <https://www.wordhippo.com/>